



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

PLANT PROTECTION DIVISION PEST PROGRAM

HORNET HERALD 21.07 – SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

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NEW DETECTIONS - AUGUST 2021

A photo of an Asian hornet attacking a paper wasp nest was submitted on August 11 by a Whatcom Co. resident. On August 12, WSDA confirmed and released the report as [the first live Asian giant hornet sighting of 2021](#). In the news release, WSDA managing entomologist Sven Spichiger commented, "This hornet is exhibiting the same behavior we saw last year – attacking paper wasp nests, if you have paper wasp nests on your property and live in the area, keep an eye on them and report any Asian giant hornets you see. Try to get a picture, and note the direction they fly off to as well."

Following the news release, a second confirmed report was submitted to WSDA via social media on August 12. These public reports together led to live captures of Asian giant hornets on August 12 and 13. Both hornets were tagged, given a pre-flight strawberry jam



meal, and released. After a few hours, the hornets took off and the team attempted to follow the signal through the dense vegetation. On August 14, one of the radio trackers was recovered, unfortunately without an Asian giant hornet attached to it. A receiver was shared with the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture to potentially locate the tagged hornet from the Canadian side of the border, but results were inconclusive.

On August 17, the other tagged hornet reappeared, foraging additional paper wasp nests. This led to the capture of a third live hornet, which was tagged and released. Following the newly tagged hornet narrowed the search and led entomologists to a suspected nest area.

1ST NEST OF 2021 LOCATED



On August 19, a WSDA tracking team and a team of USDA APHIS and ODA staff searched the suspect nest area beginning at 7:30 a.m. The team spotted the nest about 9:15 a.m.

The nest was about one-quarter mile from where a resident reported the first live sighting of Asian giant hornet on August 11. [Read the teamwork's success in locating the nest here.](#)

1ST NEST OF 2021 ERADICATED

WSDA eradicated the first Asian giant hornet nest of the year on August 25. Staff began by vacuuming 113 worker hornets from the nest and netting an additional 67. The team then exposed the nest revealing nine layers of comb, which encompassed 292 eggs, 422 larvae, 563 prepupae/pupae, and 1 queen. [Read more about how nearly 1,500 hornets in various development stages in the nest were removed.](#)



PRESS CONFERENCE UPDATE – AUGUST 26, 2021

WSDA held a virtual press conference recapping the Asian giant hornet hunt from August 11 to 25. The conference was attended by the United States Department of Agriculture, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries. Representatives were available to answer an array of questions and share information about eradication and research plans. [View the press conference here.](#)

TRACK! DON'T WHACK

The “Track! Don’t Whack!” campaign has started – with more urgency than ever given last month’s activities. WSDA is urging those who spot Asian giant hornets to NOT kill them at this time of year. While a dead Asian giant hornet does provide a detection point, it is more useful to contact WSDA to capture a live Asian giant hornet, or watch the flight direction. This aids in tracking back to the nest. Please do not try to capture live hornets yourself, but take a picture and report to the WSDA for capture. Killing one worker hornet doesn’t do much for stopping the colony, but seeing where they are flying gives us good information about the nest’s location. Eradicating Asian giant hornet is the goal!

Reports can be made online at agr.wa.gov/hornets, by emailing hornets@agr.wa.gov, or by calling 1-800-443-6684.



LIFE CYCLE UPDATE

In their native range, all Asian giant hornet colonies follow a specific life cycle.

Currently, queens are laying eggs that will become workers and expanding the colony. Workers will then emerge and attack honey bees and [other insects](#). At this time, it is important to be on the lookout as those workers become more active while hunting. The colony is working on growing to its maximum size.

Once the colony has matured, typically in the fall, the founding queen will begin to lay new virgin queens and males. The laying of new queens and males might prompt a need for excess protein in their diet, which can lead to potential honey bee hive attacks. However, this timing is also important for eradication. Once the new virgin queens and males emerge, they will mate and disperse. If the nest can be located and removed before this process, future populations of Asian giant hornets are removed.

NEW USDA ARS WEBSITE

United States Department of Agriculture Research Service has [a new Asian giant hornet webpage](#). This is a great resource to catch up on all of the Asian giant hornet research from mapping genomes to video dissections.

ASIAN GIANT HORNET FIELD TRAINING DAY

WSDA held a field training day on August 18 at Birch Bay State Park. The purpose of this training was to prepare for future Asian giant hornet activities. This event was also attended by the United States Department of Agriculture, US Forest Service, and Oregon Department of Agriculture. The teams practiced using a variety of traps, followed by tagging events which included locating hidden radio tags. The day ended with a practice eradication.

UPDATE FROM CANADA

As of August 8, 2021, there were no confirmed AGH findings in British Columbia this year. The B.C. government is increasing efforts to engage the public to report potential sightings.

In response to the August 11 confirmed detection, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries deployed additional traps near the detection around the Canadian border. On August 17, a radio receiver was deployed to potentially locate a tagged hornet from the Canadian border, however the results were inconclusive.

They plan to continue to monitor traps throughout the area from White Rock to Aldergrove, additionally they will be switching to protein-based traps as a potential lure for Asian giant hornets this fall.

STAY CONNECTED

WSDA is dedicated to working with the public and to providing information on Asian giant hornets.

Contact hornets@agr.wa.gov if you are interested in learning more about Asian giant hornets.

- View [past news releases, blogs, and Pest Program updates](#) about Asian giant hornet.
- Join the [Asian giant hornet Facebook group](#).
- Join the [Pest Program email listserv](#).
- Follow WSDA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitter](#).